

MR Book Reviews

OUR WAR: How the British Commonwealth Fought the Second World War by Christopher Somerville. 364 pages. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London. 1998. \$50.00.

Christopher Somerville's *Our War* is a valuable addition to the body of World War II history for a number of reasons. First and foremost, Somerville preserves an important record that conveys a sense of the tremendous contribution of commonwealth troops to the Allied war effort by adroitly and unobtrusively knitting together the personal accounts of soldiers themselves.

The British Commonwealth mobilized 11 million men and women, 5 million of whom came from the dominions and colonies. Of those, 430 thousand were killed in action during World War II. This contribution made Britain a major power and earned it a seat at the table among the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Although the British empire did not reach its maximum extent until after World War I, it had already begun movement inexorably to its dissolution. In 1939 the Empire bore little resemblance to that which Queen Victoria accepted title. Self-rule had been granted via the Dominion Status to several former colonies. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa were all dominions when Hitler invaded Poland. As such, they were consulted and joined the war of their own accord. The many colonies, which along with the Dominions accounted for one-fourth of the earth's surface and about the same portion of the earth's population, were committed without consultation when Britain declared war. The colonies that had no say in the decision committed the most troops. India alone provided 2.5 million of the 5 million commonwealth soldiery.

Somerville lucidly records the views of the dominion governments

and India as well as the smaller colonies. The dominions in particular did not always graciously follow the lead of the mother country. Both Canada and Australia balked and won the point when it was vital to their interests to differ. India did not come along without the views of Ghandi and the many diverse peoples



of the subcontinent being considered. Their voices were eventually heard in London and are absolutely compelling in *Our War*.

For the most part, and despite differing views about the war, commonwealth citizens willingly took up arms for a cause not entirely their own. Some joined for the adventure. Geraldine Turcotte of Canada wanted "to see the sharp end," and she did during air raids in London. One young man went to war because he was Maori, and the Maori battalion had a grand fighting tradition. Another, an Indian, joined because he loved the uniforms of his "Sepoy" regiment. Mahinder Singh Pujji wanted to fly and did in Europe and in the Pacific. There were as many reasons as there were soldiers, and each story resonates with the authenticity only first-person accounts can provide. Somerville weaves the stories into a seamless fabric that brings to life the motivation of all of those

millions who carried the cudgel for king and country.

But this is not a story wrapped in the Union Jack. Somerville illuminates the dark side of the British Empire and its successor commonwealth. Racism and cultural chauvinism abounded. Soldiers of color—Africans in particular—were subjected to racist policies and plain cultural ignorance. And, in such stories, we see the seeds of the empire's final dissolution.

African Frank Sexwhale, denied a combatant role because he was a native African soldier from South Africa, grew embittered, remembering the war as a "British war; a white man's war." Indian soldiers returning from World War II found their role in the fight not always appreciated by those at home, many of whom regarded the whole affair as supporting the imperial oppressors. An Ojibwe who fought for Canada found his old mates no longer viewed him in the same way once they were all safely home. Many soldiers returned with the conviction that their countries must go their own way. Unquestionably, the war effort produced in some colonies the seed of rebellion or peaceful separation.

Britain also made an honest commitment to the ideas of self-determination embodied in the Atlantic Charter. That also can be seen in the experiences of commonwealth soldiers. Not all of the dominions were racists; nor were the British all Pukka Sahib in their outlook. Africans flew for the Royal Air Force and Africans were eventually commissioned. The Colonial Office proved to be an ardent advocate of treating African soldiers as equals with their European counterparts. The "Indianization" of the Indian Civil Service and its armed forces was British policy. Thus Britain itself abetted the cause of Indian independence.

Our War is a great addition to the history of World War II and is a

valuable record of a generally not voluble commodity—combat veterans anywhere. Through their eyes we see a vast panorama of the war, from the North Sea to the Owen Stanley Mountains, through the special lenses of citizens of the old British Commonwealth. For all of them and all of us it was a momentous time in history. Ronald Henriques, from Jamaica, jumped into Sicily and Arnhem, where he was wounded and captured. Perhaps he speaks for all when he describes his service “as the greatest experience I have ever had—not that I’d like to go back.”

COL Gregory Fontenot, USA,
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STATE, SOCIETY AND MOBILIZATION IN EUROPE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

edited by John Horne. 292 pages. Cambridge University Press, New York. 1997. \$59.95.

In recent years, historians have shied away from calling World War I a “total war.” Total war suggests a complete mobilization of all of a society’s resources. The governments of early 20th-century Europe had neither the coercive or persuasive powers for such a comprehensive demand on the people and assets of their respective societies. Yet, the “Great War” did make unprecedented demands. It tested the strength and resilience of each combatant’s political, social and cultural institutions. This book examines how Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy faced this test.

The vast scale of the conflict that occurred from 1914 to 1918 meant the victorious side would most likely be the one that mobilized its resources best. Editor John Horne suggests, however, that “mobilization” is more than the recruitment of soldiers and the production of war materials. The mobilization considered in this collection is more directly oriented on how the populations of the various combatants were “engaged” in the war effort. With this point in mind, Horne organizes the collection around five themes. The first concerns the chronology of mobilization. When, for example, did coercion replace persuasion as a tool for mobilization? The second

theme considers the role of pre-existing patterns of socialization. How well did various minorities respond to mobilization? The third theme examines the forms and languages of mobilization. Which appeals worked, which did not? A fourth topic is the response of military institutions to a general crisis in morale. How did armies sustain morale in the last years of the war? The final theme looks at state remobilization in the war’s latter stages. How was propaganda and repression used to get nations to make the final surge to victory?

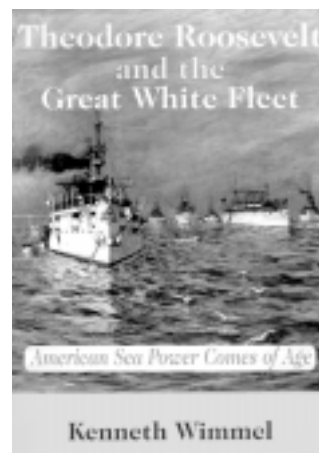
Across these five themes some general trends emerge. Initially, the populations of the European powers were persuaded to give nearly unanimous support to the war effort. However, with lengthening casualty lists and wartime rationing, popular morale flagged. As the conflict dragged into its third and fourth years, the warring governments were confronted with the need to remobilize the support of both their soldiers and civilians.

Each combatant responded differently to the challenge of remobilization. France successfully overcame the challenges caused by military mutiny and civilian disillusionment by appealing to the republican spirit of soldiers and civilian workers. The authoritarian regimes of Austria-Hungary and Germany failed to regenerate consensus on the war effort. Germany’s warlords would not make the political concessions needed for renewed national spirit, while the Habsburg dynasty lacked both the means and the will to challenge the tide of nationalist mobilization, which eventually overwhelmed the empire. Italy, though a victor in the war, increased its social tensions through its attempts to remobilize popular support. Thus, say contributing authors Paul Corner and Giovanna Procacci, problems in Italian mobilization previewed the rise of Fascism in the postwar period.

The military professional will find some parts of this collection more interesting and relevant than others. The way the different warring powers handled mobilization tells us

much about the complex relationship of a country’s political, social, economic and military institutions.

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE GREAT WHITE FLEET:

American Sea Power Comes of Age by Kenneth Wimmel. 304 pages. Brassey’s Publishing Company, Dulles, VA. 1998. \$25.95.

Perhaps no other political figure has had as much impact on the US Navy as did Theodore Roosevelt. More important, his presence coincided with a crucial period of American history in which, after the Civil War, we went from near-nonexistent American naval presence to the glorious era of the mighty battleship.

Roosevelt’s interest in naval history began early, and in 1862 his book *The Naval War Of 1812* (Modern Library, 1999, \$15.95) helped propel him into both the political spotlight and establish him as a qualified spokesman on naval affairs. Roosevelt’s determination, influence and foresight were instrumental in moving the American Navy from an obsolete coastal defense force to one of the most powerful navies in the world—the “Great White Fleet.”

Author Kenneth Wimmel focuses on much more than the events surrounding the Great White Fleet. He retraces events in the late 1860s and reflects on the disintegration of the American Navy and the lack of interest on the part of Congress and the American people to maintain a naval presence outside the realm of

coastal defense. To compound the situation, some high-ranking Navy officers were also resistant to change. Wimmel describes the many hurdles shipbuilding yards had to overcome as steel and steamships pushed canvas and wooden ships into history.

The 1898 Spanish-American War resulted in the defeat of the Spanish fleets at Manila Bay, Philippines, and Santiago, Cuba. Land victories at El Caney and San Juan Hill, in which Roosevelt won national acclaim as a "rough rider," proved to be major steps in America's effort to become a world power. The Great White Fleet empowered Roosevelt and others who envisioned the United States as a world naval power.

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MY TIME IN HELL: *Memoir of an American Soldier Imprisoned by the Japanese in World War II* by Andrew D. Carson. 254 pages. McFarland & Company, Jefferson, NC. 1997. \$29.95.

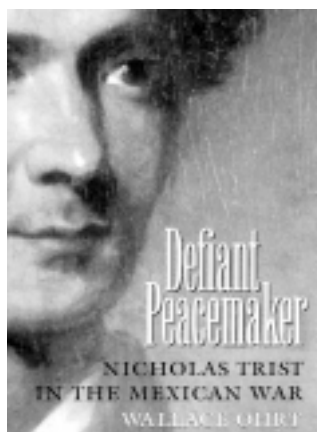
Within seven weeks of enlisting in the US Army in March 1941, Andrew D. Carson found himself in the Philippines. One year later, he became one of 36,000 American prisoners of war (POWs) following the final surrender of US forces to the Japanese. For Carson and his comrades, this was the beginning of an ordeal that lasted for 3 1/2 years and claimed 21,000 lives. Carson's story is a harrowing tale of human misery and the ultimate triumph of the will to survive.

Carson vividly describes the horrors and attributes his own survival to a combination of willpower, support from his comrades and sheer luck. Following his ordeal at the camp, Carson and several hundred other POWs were packed into the hold of a "hell ship" and transported to Fukuoka, where he spent the remainder of the war mining coal.

My Time in Hell unsparingly depicts the degradation and misery of Japanese captivity in a manner not for the squeamish. Other readers, however, will find Carson's memoir an emotion-stirring tale of victory, not in the form of glory on the battlefield but, rather, in the form of

mere survival. Written in a straightforward, almost conversational style, the book is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on the POW experience.

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DEFIANT PEACEMAKER: *Nicholas Trist in the Mexican War* by Wallace Ohrt. 224 pages. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX. 1998. \$29.95.

It certainly would not happen today. The chief clerk of the US State Department conducts peace negotiations during an ongoing war. Later, after angering President James Polk and Secretary of State James Buchanan, he is recalled, not once but twice. However, he refuses to go home and subsequently negotiates a treaty that increases the country's size by two-fifths. This is the story of Nicholas Trist.

Author Wallace Ohrt wisely refrains from excessive detail in describing the Mexico City Campaign. He artfully describes the problems Trist encountered in dealing with the ever-touchy General Winfield Scott, who could never accept criticism lightly. After his and Trist's first "confusion," both men resorted to the pen to air their views. These exchanges are the book's more interesting features.

The heart of this work is the utter defiance Trist shows to Buchanan and Polk. Trist was concerned that the movement to take all of Mexico in the treaty was gaining steam, and

his replacement would be under great pressure to do just that. Trist had orders to push for a gentler, though still harsh, peace. He wrote high Mexican officials: "I am fully persuaded that its terms [of his earlier instruction] would not, by any means, meet the views now entertained by my government. . . . It remains to be seen whether the Mexican Government can come up to the mark and give effect to my resolve, 'now or never' is the word." To make such a decision, then to make a treaty he knew could lead to his ruin, is amazing. Once the decision was made, however, Trist concluded the talks with ruthless efficiency.

Ohrt's research takes full advantage of Trist family papers at the University of North Carolina. His work with secondary sources could be better however—several of the works are dated and have been surpassed by more recent scholarship. This flaw should not concern those interested in reading a biography of a noteworthy, if not famous, 19th-century gentleman. Ohrt makes his case that without Trist our nation's history would have been greatly different. As Ohrt states, it was "only the work of one rather eccentric idealist [Trist] . . . [that] enables us to consider what happened during the Mexican War without . . . 'a thorough revulsion.'"

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PURSUIT OF THE SHIELD: *The U.S. Quest for Limited Ballistic Missile Defense* by K. Scott McMahon and John Warner. 408 pages. University Press of America, Lanham, MD. 1997. \$62.00.

In *Pursuit of the Shield: The U.S. Quest for Limited Ballistic Missile Defense*, K. Scott McMahon and John Warner argue that the United States should field a nuclear missile defense (NMD) system as soon as possible. McMahon and Warner effectively compare and contrast the interaction between technology, threat perception, national security strategy and the political forces that led to the rise and fall of a limited ballistic missile defense (BMD)

during the Cold War and its resurgence in the 1990s. The authors develop a coherent NMD strategy proposal they hope will generate enough military, civilian and political support to sustain it through deployment and operations.

McMahon and Warner review the history of failed US attempts at strategic BMD and argue that it is now technically feasible, affordable and strategically sound to develop and deploy an NMD system consisting of multiple ground-based interceptor sites augmented by ground- and space-based missile-tracking sensors. They recommend a phased NMD deployment beginning with immediate preparations to reactivate the former Sentinel-Safeguard site at Grand Forks, North Dakota. They also suggest adding additional sites later to provide a capability to defend all 50 states from future rogue state threats and unauthorized or accidental ballistic missile launches from Russia or China.

Although the authors' proposal of having a ground-based NMD system is feasible, it does not address the potential for sea- or space-based NMD elements. They make the assumption that a single, initial, ground-based interceptor site consisting of no more than 100 interceptor missiles would comply with the 1972 Armed Ballistic Missile Treaty. Unfortunately, they do not present a substantive legal analysis of the treaty to support this assumption. But they maintain that additional sites, not compliant with the treaty, will be required to effectively defend all 50 states. Thus, the United States must immediately begin negotiations to modify the treaty to permit a multisite NMD system. To this end, McMahon and Warner provide a comprehensive arms control regime for updating the treaty while continuing strategic arms reduction efforts. They say: "The regime is designed to reassure arms control supporters by proving that strategic stability can be maintained with defenses and very low strategic force levels."

McMahon and Warner believe global nonproliferation efforts might slow the spread of weapons of mass destruction among rogue states, but

such efforts will not stop proliferation—as India's May 1998 nuclear test demonstrates. The authors add: "Current US policy is to 'bet the country' that deterrence will work perfectly forever while hoping that the disintegration of Russia's strategic command and control system will not lead to unauthorized missile launches. This is a bad bet!"

McMahon and Warner make a sound argument for developing and deploying a NMD system—"putting 'rubber on the road' to protect American families." *Pursuit of the Shield* is a must read for everyone interested in the politically charged issue of national missile defense.

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CULTURAL SCHIZOPHRENIA:
Islamic Societies Confronting the West
by Darius Shayegan and John Howe. Translated by Daryush Shayegan. 200 pages. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY. 1997. \$10.95.

Darius Shayegan's and John Howe's work is an encompassing philosophical analysis of the current challenges facing the modern Islamic world. They draw on Shayegan's previous work, *Qu'est-Qu'une Révolution Religieuse?* (*What is a Religious Revolution?*), and his vast experience and background as a former philosophy professor to introduce and support their thesis.

The authors' primary argument is that the Islamic world is caught between two cultures and societies—one rooted in tradition with conservative Islamic beliefs, the other promoting modernity. They attempt to demonstrate how Muslim efforts to adapt and integrate both paradigms promote the rise of reactionary forces, which are slowly tearing apart the current culture caught between the attraction of Western materialism and an unwillingness to let go of its firm basis of metaphysical belief.

They argue that Islamic nations are primarily at fault for their own dilemma. In their opinion, the Muslim world withdrew into a completely traditional world, allowing the West to pass them. The West's secularization and adaptation to a

nonmystical acceptance of the world allowed great strides in technology not possible under Islam.

Since the turn of the century, the Muslim world has attempted to find a way to adapt to the modern world without losing its unique traditional aspects. Therein is the root of the conflict. The vast divergence between the modern and the traditional and the lack of a secular intellectual group within Islamic societies to bridge the gap has led to the increasingly reactionary focus of traditional forces, primarily the nonsecular clergy.

Overall, the authors' arguments are interesting and thought provoking. The book is insightful and informative, even though it was written for the reader with a strong background in Islamic beliefs and Western philosophy.

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KEKIONGA! by Wilbur Edel. 148 pages. Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT. 1997. \$55.00.

At best, *Kekionga!* contains some interesting and useful segments on Native American relations as they correspond to pre-colonial Native American civilizations, colonialization by Europeans, global barbarism and the recent recognition of Indian rights. At worst, the book is a disjointed, tenuous description of several different topics author Wilbur Edel tries to link to US treatment of Native Americans. Either way, the book is grossly mistitled. A mere four pages deal with events leading up to the battle of Kekionga and the battle itself.

While purporting to explain the battle and its implications, Edel cites an abundance of well-documented, extraneous information. He claims that "a review of these conditions is essential to the understanding of events that led to the central topic of this study—the significance and after-effects of a battle in which an inferior force of Ohio Indians inflicted on the American army the worst defeat in its entire history." Yet *Kekionga!* is a tangential, rambling narrative of US-Indian affairs having little to do with the campaign or battle.

Edel inundates the reader with irrelevant information—global barbarism during the Crusades to modern Bosnia, although the Battle of Kerkira is never described as barbaric; fights between the early colonies over religious differences; and implications of legislation on modern tribal gambling facilities. The explanation of the battle, allegedly the

subject of the book, is limited to about one and one-half pages.

There are a few implied lessons for the military professional to be gleaned from this compilation of primarily extraneous information. Early government leaders became convinced of the need for a professional standing Army. An effective counterreconnaissance plan is a ne-

cessity when campaigning in hostile territory. Mobility and speed are key to successful irregular operations, as demonstrated by the mounted Kentucky volunteers. And to be effective, tactical intelligence must be acted on immediately. St. Clair's second in command was warned of an imminent attack the night before the battle by one of his

M_R Video Review

Based on the positive feedback we received about our new feature, Video Reviews, we are soliciting reviews of recent military- or history-related videos. Reviews should follow the same guidelines as book reviews. Contact our book review editor or see our web site for more information.—Editor

THE KOREAN WAR: Fire and Ice
New York, NY: The History Channel, A Division of A&E Television Networks, released 20 September 1999, Run time: 178 minutes. Cost not available.

The Korean War's 50th anniversary is generating a renewed interest in the conflict that began the second half of the 20th century. While the war was definitely a UN-sponsored response, the United States was obviously the major force on the ground, in the air and on the seas.

To commemorate the war, The History Channel has produced another interesting film in its series of Korean War histories. *The Korean War: Fire and Ice* gives a good general account of the war from the American perspective and interviews a variety of experts on and participants in the conflict.

The strength of this film is in the excellent repertoire of speakers who add credibility to the historical record. If the film has a shortcoming in coverage, it is the failure to interview or show more South Korean Army participants, who were our major allies. They are mentioned several times, but they do not receive the proper recognition for their contributions. For example, interviews of retired South Korean heroes such as General Paik Sun Yup would have added a lot to the film.

What I like about the film is that it is unabashedly pro-UN and pro-

American. There are no apologies for the bombing of North Korea or the destruction of its aggressive military. Unlike *Korea: The Unknown War*, a 1997 Thames Television/PBS documentary, the History Channel's film clearly cites communist aggression as the war's cause.

While *The Korean War: Fire and Ice* does not interview communist North Korean and Red Chinese participants, it does avoid the problem encountered by the Thames production of not providing critical analyses of the communists' extremely biased claims. In *The Unknown War*, the viewer is left with the impression that the "bad guys"—North Koreans and Red Chinese—were mistreated by UN and US forces. No challenge to their claims was made. Fifty years from now people watching that film will have the distinct impression that the Reds were within their rights to commit atrocities for which they have never been judged. I attribute this to the residual self-flagellation over Vietnam.

One weakness of *Fire and Ice* lies in something as simple as pronunciation. Preciseness is important, especially in matters of "military" geography. Several relatively easy names were mispronounced, including those of the towns of Taejon, Wonsong and Kap-Yong. Such mispronunciations could mislead anyone trying to track these locations on a map. In addition, film and script interface on some scenes was misleading. A diving *Sturmovik* ground attack aircraft is shown while the narrator is speaking of Yak fighters. This is a minor point, but showing one type of aircraft while speaking

of another is confusing.

In another vein, with the availability of military advisers, the lack of knowledge or awareness of the "operational" level of war surprised me. Speakers shift easily from the tactical to the strategic levels with no acknowledgement of the intermediate level, thus giving the impression that the strategic is a melding of everything above the tactical.

Finally, in both the introductory letter accompanying the tape and on the tape itself, US casualty figures cited do not match any of which I, as a former history instructor at the US Army Command and General Staff College, am aware. The numbers seem to be grossly "off" official published figures. For example, the introductory letter cites "more than" 100,000 dead American servicemen. The video cites 27,000 dead US servicemen. Figures in other reputable published sources list 54,246 dead (33,629 battlefield deaths) and 103,284 wounded US forces. This total comes to 157,530. Any way you cut it, the figures are not even close.

My father, a three-war veteran, clearly considers his experience as a company grade infantry officer in Korea from 1950 to 1951 as the most significant of his long career. Reminiscences of the veterans interviewed ring true to the experiences my father shared. As promised by the producers, *The Korean War: Fire and Ice* evokes strong emotional feelings and provides a tribute to those who served. And, in the end, the film's strengths outbalance its shortcomings. It provides a good reference for future generations.

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subordinate commanders, but he failed to take action.

In the introduction, Edel promises to explain the significance of the battle of Kekionga because little has been written on it and because it was such a crucial loss to the US Army. Out of 1,400 US soldiers engaged, only 500 survived. It was definitely a major tactical Indian victory, but it ultimately led to the destruction of the Ohio Indian forces by General Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers. In numeric losses and strategic implications, the US Army has taken far, far worse drubbings than it did at Kekionga. True, the loss of the battle did result in the first formal congressional inquiry—the author's sole criteria for calling Kekionga the worst defeat—but the US government was less than 10 years old! The author belabors the injustices done to Native American tribes throughout history, which appears to be his real intent, but he fails to present a credible study of the battle.

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THE ART OF MILITARY DECEPTION by Mark Lloyd. 256 pages. Leo Cooper, New York. 1997. \$31.95.

In May 1998, India caught the world off guard when it detonated five nuclear devices. This was accomplished by its use of misdirection and a weakness in satellite surveillance coverage. India did not hide the fact it was about to test its 900-mile-range Agni missile. The test created a great amount of interest in the United States, which became singularly focused on that event. The region in which the test was conducted is extremely hot and subject to sandstorms, which India knew would disrupt or blind satellite sensors. Also, the test was scheduled when there was little or no surveillance satellite coverage. In light of India's ability to successfully hide its preparation for the nuclear test, we must relook deception operations.

Mark Lloyd's book *The Art of Military Deception* provides 80 examples of deception ranging from tactical to strategic and from Jericho to the Gulf War. For example, during World

War II, British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, who was easily recognized, became a key indicator for German agents. They believed that where Montgomery appeared some offensive action would occur. Realizing this, England placed a Montgomery "look-alike" in highly visible locations—so visible, in fact, that for a while Germany thought the D-Day invasion would occur somewhere in the Mediterranean.

Lloyd also outlines psychological operations, which rely heavily on the use of propaganda. Propaganda was originally defined as the dissemination of biased ideas and opinions, often through the use of lies and deception. Lloyd uses the term to refer to mass persuasion.

If this book has a drawback, it is that some of Lloyd's examples could have been described in more detail to give the reader a better appreciation of the events he is describing. But for now, we get a brief taste of each example's deception activity.

As stated in the beginning of the book, "The art of military deception is as old as warfare itself. It has long been regarded as a force multiplier and has been employed in virtually every successful campaign in military history." For that reason alone, this book should be on everyone's professional reading list.

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Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado

NIGHT OF THE SILVER STARS:
The Battle of Lang Vei by William R. Phillips with William C. Westmoreland. 272 pages. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1997. \$29.95.

The battle of Lang Vei, on the night of 6-7 February 1968, is easily lost in the overall context of the Vietnam War. It was overshadowed by the Tet Offensive and is sometimes viewed as just a small part of the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA's) siege at the US Marine Corps enclave 5 miles east of Lang Vei. The NVA assault against Lang Vei involved a substantial force supported by extensive artillery fires. The assault force included 11 Soviet-designed PT-76 amphibious tanks—the first use of armor in an NVA assault against US and South Vietnamese

forces during the Vietnam War.

Authors William R. Phillips and William C. Westmoreland provide a detailed and readable description of the battle. In addition to both published and unpublished sources, research included interviews with a few US survivors of the battle and several other US forces personnel associated with the operation.

Taking its name from an adjacent Bru (Montagnard tribe) village, the Lang Vei camp had been developed



by US Special Forces (SF) with significant support from a US Navy SEABEE unit. In addition to SF personnel at Lang Vei, the defenders included an Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam (ARVN) SF team, four half-strength civilian irregular defense group companies (made up of both ethnic Vietnamese and Bru tribesmen), one "MIKE Force" company (Hre tribesmen) and three ARVN combat reconnaissance platoons. Twelve days before the NVA assault, the 33d Royal Laotian Elephant Battalion (500 men and 2,200 dependents), fleeing from an NVA assault, appeared and became part of Lang Vei's defenses.

Phillips and Westmoreland develop the background of the battle and introduce the reader to many US and Vietnamese personalities. They discuss, rather bluntly, the association between SF personnel and the Marines at Khe Sanh. The narrative of the battle is gripping as it follows the activities of various individuals. The result is a picture of remarkably skilled and courageous professionals

using all available resources, including artillery and aerial fire support, in an effort to fend off an assault by a vastly superior force. Phillips' description includes the final moments of the battle as US personnel and many of the wounded are extracted from the area by another SF team using Army and, reluctantly, USMC helicopters.

Recognizing the authors' extensive research, I would still have appreciated a citation of specific sources rather than the general acknowledgment of sources provided in each chapter. Despite this shortcoming, the book is worth adding to any library.

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NATIONS AT WAR: A Scientific Study of International Conflict by Daniel S. Geller and J. David Singer. 242 pages. Cambridge University Press, New York. 1998. \$59.95.

Nations at War is, as authors Daniel S. Geller and J. David Singer state, "designed to provide an explanation of war in international politics grounded on data-based, empirical research." They rely heavily on a statistical approach to find correlates between the outbreak of war and nations, groups of nations and selected international structures. The choice of the word "correlates" is important because the authors freely admit it is difficult to pinpoint "causes" of war.

This book is clearly a work in the field of social science and is not meant to be a history of particular events. Unlike most social science works, it does not set out to prove a unified theory. In fact, the authors do not present a single thesis or conclusion, and while the lack of a unified thesis might be a weakness to most books, Geller and Singer make a powerful argument that justifies their methodology. They endeavor to examine multiple systems and their correlations to war, believing this approach, along with the database technique of evidence, leads to a series of modest conclusions.

Although the authors should be applauded for their modesty and firm adherence to the honesty of the

numbers, their work contains faults that make it of limited value to the general military reader. First, as in all statistical studies of complex human events, they must categorize and simplify their data. For example, one database is based on three levels of war and categorizes a "severe war" as one involving over 15,000 battle deaths. This invites several questions, each of which could change the data's correlates. What if we made four, five, six or more categories? What if a severe war was 30,000 deaths? What if we include some nonbattle casualties caused by disease? Another major problem is that this data-based analysis fails to capture the subtlety of human history and leads to broad conclusions that should already be intuitively obvious.

The authors provide an interesting approach, but the reader might be better served by in-depth studies of individual cases examining specific causes of a war in all of their complexity.

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LIBERAL PEACE, LIBERAL WAR: American Politics and International Security by John M. Owen IV. 224 pages. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. 1997. \$35.00.

US National Security Strategy is predicated on the assumption that democracies seldom, if ever, wage war against one another. According to John M. Owen IV, democracy—or more appropriately, liberalism, is the multifaceted ideology that prevents

nations from fighting each other.

A liberal state is defined as possessing two domestic institutions—freedom of discussion and regular competitive elections. The peace that is maintained between liberal states cannot be attributed solely to wealth, alliances, geography or any other variable. Peace is maintained because it is believed to be intrinsically good, liberal nations are pacific and trustworthy and relations with other liberal states strengthen internal liberal institutions.

Liberal states do fight wars with nations that are perceived as "illiberal" with the express purpose of making them liberal. Illiberal states are perceived as belligerent and threatening to the liberal states' institutions. Owen argues that power or wealth does not ultimately determine perceptions. Instead, the recognition of another nation as liberal or illiberal is based on the inherent vision for one's own nation, which is based on political institutions.

Owen examines 10 war-threatening events that involved the United States. The events range from the Anglo-American crisis from 1794 to 1796 through the Spanish-American crisis from 1895 to 1898. He discusses how liberal each nation was at the time of conflict; how the two nations perceived each other; and the actions, interpretations and reactions of the nations in conflict. Owen convincingly demonstrates why democracies avoid conflict with one another. Using a research model, he carefully points out his hypotheses and the limitations to his argument. What is most refreshing is that he deliberately points out alternative viewpoints.

MAJ Debra D. Mark, USA,
*Command and General Staff College,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

BEYOND THE LOOKING GLASS: Overcoming the Seductive Culture of Corporate Narcissism by Alan Downs. 208 pages. American Management Association, New York. 1997. \$24.95.

Think of the worst person you have ever worked for, one who made you hate coming to work most days. In fact, think of the worst leader or manager you have ever seen. Once you have that picture

clearly in your mind, read Alan Downs' book *Beyond the Looking Glass* to better understand what may have made that person such a villain.

Downs says a plague has infected corporate America: narcissistic managers. He traces the evolution of corporations from organizations chartered for the public good, to deregulated monoliths dominated by the "robber barons" of the late 19th century, to today's corporations dominated by a culture that values profit above all else. These corporations, he proposes, have nurtured a new breed of corporate managers.

Most of us have probably known, if not worked for, what Downs calls narcissistic managers. He describes them as manipulative, self-serving leaders with an insatiable need for validation through promotion, dominance, reward and recognition. They are often workaholics and empire builders who seek personal visibility by taking credit for the work of others and blaming failures on subordinates or peers. They believe subordinates serve primarily to make the manager look good. These managers stop at nothing to get the job accomplished—controlling information, communication and decision making to fulfill their need for power.

Narcissistic managers excel by focusing on the short term, using flashy, highly visible, self-promoting projects at the expense of their people and the organization's well being. They are supported by "enablers," who work for the manager and help him succeed—until he discards them on his journey to the top. Generally the narcissistic manager's own section is highly efficient or profitable—at the cost of the corporation's overall mission, institutional values and employee loyalty.

Downs describes the characteristics of organizations that promote narcissistic managers and recommends coping strategies. He also proposes some practical ways for organizations to change their culture to eliminate this scourge. More important, he encourages readers to examine their own behavior to determine if they have narcissistic tendencies.

This book should sound an alarm for military readers. Downs describes the characteristics of organizations that encourage narcissistic managers—financially troubled, closed-system, centrally powered, resistant-to-change. These organizations grow haphazardly, relying on empire builders surrounded by yes-men who promote their "pet rocks" to increase their individual power. We can easily see how our current military is vulnerable.

The image of Courtney Masengale in Anton Myrer's and John W. Vessey's classic *Once an Eagle* (US Army War College Foundation Press, Carlisle, PA, 1997, \$15.00) describes a narcissistic manager's climb to the top. In our demanding profession, we may all see a little of the narcissist, the enabler, and the victim in ourselves. This excellent book is worth the senior leader's time. It stimulates us to read and reflect on our own values and supervisory methods as we evaluate our leadership styles. Careerism, a synonym for what Downs calls narcissism, is even more destructive for us in the military than narcissism is for a corporation.

LTC Michael D. Jones, USA, 16th Cavalry Regiment, Fort Knox, Kentucky

US MARINES IN VIETNAM:

The Defining Year, 1968, by J. Shulminson, L.A. Blasiol and S. Davis. 805 pages. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1997. \$70.00.

This is the final publication in the nine-volume series concerning US Marine activities in the Vietnam War. Its focus is a shift of the US Marine Corps from static defense to mobile offense, creation of fire-support bases, of unprecedented numbers of casualties and increasing involvement of US Army airmobile units alongside Marines in the I Corps area. During this defining year, the conflict grew from sporadic guerrilla encounters to battles of battalion and regiment size against well-trained and led regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces. Such changes required significant alterations in command structure.

The book is separated into three parts. The first is in the familiar

style of detailed operational reports of ground Marines down to platoon and company levels that has characterized official military histories for half a century. In addition to the meticulous historic scholarship set in previous volumes, there are frequent invited commentaries on the operations by participants in battles that occurred more than a quarter of a century ago. These commentaries are far more valuable than after-action reviews because over time emotions cool and objective perspective is gained. Written by those who have retired from service and have no ax to grind, the essays are often refreshingly critical and contain positive suggestions for change. The authors wisely use these comments as footnotes. Often they are as valuable as the text and are frequently more sprightly and interesting.

The second portion of the book focuses on the air war. It documents the bitter struggle between higher commands for command dominance. The US Air Force wanted a "single manager concept" under its command. The Marines wanted to avoid this system, which would have robbed them of close tactical air support as happened during the Korean War. With General William C. Westmoreland's backing, the Air Force won the power struggle. However, the issue obviously still rankles.

The total neglect of the thousands of doctors, nurses and corpsmen who provided care for 29,320 Marines wounded in action that year can only be explained by the authors not considering the US Navy Medical Department a part of the Marines. An invited commentary of the preliminary manuscript by a medical department representative or one of the wounded Marines would have provided an interesting footnote.

Written and published almost 30 years after the fact, this volume contains few previously unreported facts concerning the pivotal 1968 battles. There are, however, some areas of palpable criticism that deserve mention. The Marines began 1968 in the unaccustomed position of being spread over the I Corps area on defense. The NVA, on the offense, chose the site and timing of each

battle. The Marines, ill prepared for their role, suffered needless casualties from not being dug in properly. Throughout the year, ammunition dumps were repeatedly destroyed by NVA rocket or artillery fire. In June, however, there was a change of command. General Creighton Abrams took over and things soon changed. The Marines began to go on the offense and made good use of helicopter mobility received from the Army's 1st Cavalry and 101st Airborne divisions.

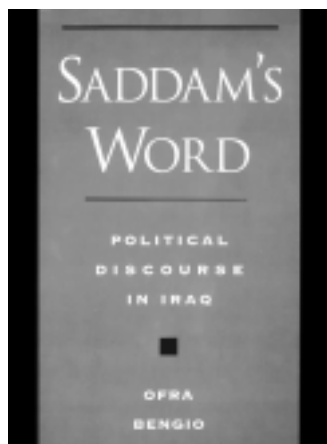
Among the several criticisms of Westmoreland was his insistence that Khe Sanh continue to be defended even after the siege had been lifted and the base was no longer of military value. Such an unwise defense cost almost as many lives as were lost during the siege. Another criticism was of Westmoreland's consistent support for building a fortified line along the demilitarized zone (DMZ). Many lives were lost in a series of battles along this line before the operation was abandoned.

There is often an irresistible desire by the losing side of any war to point fingers. The authors of this official Marine report are discreet, giving high marks to cooperation between the Marines and the Army (except for Westmoreland). They document the managerial turf battle with the Air Force but acknowledge its important support. They often mention Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam (ARVN) support, although in tones of disappointment. However, throughout the book there is a sense of admiration for the professionalism, tenacity and offensive spirit of the North Vietnamese—faced as they were with a total lack of air cover and having a materiel disadvantage.

This is an important book for professional soldiers and Marines. It covers the year when US and ARVN forces successfully repulsed NVA offenses at Khe Sanh, Hue and during the Tet Offensive. By the end of the year, most military professionals realized that, given the necessary limitations on what the US should commit to this conflict, we would not be able to impose our beliefs

and military might on a country that was not as willing as we were to achieve its war aims.

RADM Ben Eiseman, USNR,
Retired, Englewood, Colorado



SADDAM'S WORD: Political Discourse in Iraq by Ofra Bengio. 288 pages. Oxford University Press, New York. 1998. \$52.00.

Ofra Bengio, a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, examines Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's use of language, historical myths and religious terms in speeches, newspaper articles and political writings to justify his actions and sustain his power base. This study will certainly appeal to linguists and Middle East specialists, but a broader spectrum of political scientists, historians and military-affairs specialists can also find insights into how a dictatorship uses cultural outlets, the educational system and media for its own purposes.

The Ba'ath party came to power in Iraq in 1968, and Hussein became its undisputed leader in 1979. For 30 years this regime has not only held sway but also proved, as Bengio notes, to be "a master of verbal manipulation." This manipulation furthers the regime's interests in several ways. First, by repeatedly describing their rise to power as "revolutionary" and their government as a "popular democracy," the Ba'athists assume a mantle of legitimacy by claiming to have the support of the people. Saddam, the "indispensable leader" of this regime, is held as a role model for all to emulate.

The Ba'athists further seek to enhance their legitimacy and popularity by comparing their actions, and their leader, to historical Arab and Islamic events and personalities. Selectively interpreted history thus provides justification for present policies. Also, Saddam deflects attention from internal problems by always keeping a variety of external enemies in the public eye. Iraq, as the self-proclaimed champion of Arab nationalism, must be strong in the face of Western imperialism, Zionist enmity and Farsi (Iranian) ambitions.

Bengio freely admits that she, as an outsider, cannot fully assess the impact of all this "verbal manipulation" on the Iraqi people. The continued opposition of Kurdish and Shi'ite factions to the ruling Ba'athists certainly indicates that not everyone is happy with Saddam's "enlightened" leadership. The Sunni minority that fills the ranks of the Ba'athist party, however, has been absorbing a constant barrage of Saddam's rhetoric, without dissenting voices, for three decades. The regime's longevity is no doubt due to continued support from this manipulated, loyal minority.

Bengio does not compare Saddam's regime with other dictatorships. The Ba'athists' use of revolutionary political rhetoric, distortion of historical events and personalities, the promotion of a cult of personality that centers on Saddam, the control of all media and cultural outlets, emphasis on external threats to divert attention and to justify military expansion and targeting of the young through the education system are not new techniques. Bengio provides an insightful look at how yet another dictator uses these propaganda tools to advantage.

LTC Peter S. Kindsvatter, USA,
Retired, Horsham, Pennsylvania

THE MIDDLE EAST: From the End of Empire to the End of the Cold War by P.J. Vatikiotis. 284 pages. Routledge Press, New York. 1997. \$65.00.

This book brings together 23 papers by one of England's foremost Arabists. Written between 1962 and 1995, the papers collectively offer an

excellent overview of the political evolution of Egypt and the Levant from the end of the Ottoman Empire to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Author P.J. Vatikiotis writes as an intimate of the cultural elite. He is an astute observer and participant in the painfully slow efforts to engage the masses.

Egypt is by far the most populous state in the Middle East. It is also the only nation with ethnically defined borders and is a key force for long-term stability. Almost every other state consists of diverse tribal, religious and cultural groups within artificially contrived areas defined by colonial powers in this century.

Vatikiotis is at his best when describing the fissures that split the area's major religions—Islam's Shi'as and Sunnis and Judaism's traditional Orthodox and more modern reformist movements. He also elaborates on the goals and beliefs of extremist organizations such as the Islamic Hezbollah and Israeli Kach.

Each of these organizations conceives a transcendent, theocratic state based on revelations made known to its historic prophet. Each rejects compromise, ostracizes non-believers and depends on violence to gain its objectives. The failure of each movement's "revealed truth" is that it does not convey a workable form of government beyond the individual or group. This discontinuity has led to the ongoing church-state conflicts in Iran, Hezbollah's commitment to the "nation of Islam" and policy confrontations within Israel's governing coalition.

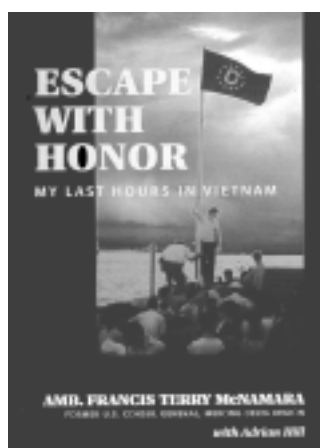
Vatikiotis also traces the position and tactics of authoritarian leaders Hafiz al-Assad in Syria and Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the "elites" who maintain an iron grip in key Arab states. He describes region leaders' rise to power and how they retain their positions by skillful manipulation of minority factions. For some the hold on power is tenuous, and their latitude is constrained by religious fundamentalists whose support they need.

Predictions of radical changes in the future—the demise of several

regimes, the emergence of a new core of power consisting of the more advanced states and the gradual acceptance of secular government—make this book a valuable lens through which to view an area vital to US interests and global security.

Vatikiotis bases his cautious optimism on a sense of inevitability and an unstated Arab fatalism. His book is particularly useful as an introduction for those with limited exposure to the political, religious and cultural environments of the area.

COL John W. Messer, USAR,
Retired, Ludington, Michigan



ESCAPE WITH HONOR: My Last Hours in Vietnam by Francis Terry McNamara with Adrian Hill. 224 pages. Brassey's, Washington, D.C. 1997. \$21.95.

When Francis Terry McNamara took over as consul general at Can Tho in the Mekong Delta in August 1974, he brought with him a valuable background of experience. He had arrived on an earlier Vietnam tour just before the Tet Offensive and was posted to duty with the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) group in Vinh Long, an important delta province that suffered heavily during Tet. Later that year, McNamara went to Quang Tri, the northernmost province in South Vietnam.

After his tour with CORDS, he was assigned until mid-1971 to the consulate in DaNang, which served the I Corps area. In addition to his Vietnam experience, McNamara served in the US Navy during World

War II and Korea. He knew how to handle boats and was a graduate of the US Naval War College. Perhaps most important, he had gained firsthand experience at handling a major evacuation during the Congo crisis in the early 1960s.

The first half of this book is a brilliant analysis of the situation in the delta in the final months of South Vietnam's existence. McNamara worked hard with the new—and honest—corps commander General Nguyen Khoa Nam to improve security.

McNamara, heading a team composed of all US agencies operating in the delta, found that the existing consul general evacuation plan contemplated abandoning Vietnamese staffers, evacuating only Americans by air or road. There was no plan to use the great Mekong River that flowed through Can Tho. McNamara insisted that the evacuation plan be rewritten to include 500 key Vietnamese staffers and that the river be part of that plan. "Airports can be closed and roads can be blocked," he said. "Large rivers, however, cannot be cut, and they are difficult to interdict for an enemy with no navy."

The second half of the book deals with the last days in Can Tho and the voyage down river. All Americans and Vietnamese staffers cooperated fully, except the CIA team, which fled to Saigon in helicopters, leaving one American to destroy coding devices and sensitive documents. Two US Agency for International Development (USAID) mechanized landing craft (LCMs), which had been supplying Phnom Penh before it fell to Pol Pot, were made available to McNamara. When the Vietnamese crew of one LCM deserted, McNamara took the wheel, and both craft, loaded with American, Filipino and Vietnamese employees and their families—including those abandoned by the CIA—got under way just as the tide began to ebb.

It was 70 miles to the sea, through territory mostly controlled by the enemy. However, the first interruption came from the Vietnamese navy,

which fired on then held the two LCMs to determine if there were any Vietnamese males of military age aboard. Later, an enemy rocket missed McNamara's LCM by 10 meters. The suspected enemy position was silenced with grenade launchers, BARs and M-16s. McNamara, with some pride, remarks that to his knowledge these were the last shots fired by Americans in the Vietnam War.

The two LCMs, full of exhausted and scared people, reached the sea at nightfall. Later that night, they finally encountered an American freighter, which initially tried to drive them off, then relented, telling McNamara that the US Navy wanted him to sail the two LCMs to Vung Tau, 80 miles distant, by morning. Somehow it was accomplished.

This is the best personal narrative of the final days of South Vietnam since Army Captain Stuart A. Herrington's bitter *Peace with Honor? An American Reports on Vietnam 1973-1975* (out of print), which appeared 15 years ago.

COL Thomas S. Jones, USA,
Retired, Clearwater, Florida

LIFE OF GEN. ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON: Embracing His Services in the Armies of the United States, the Republic of Texas and the Confederate States by William Preston Johnston. 800 pages. State House Press, New York. 1997. \$45.00.

Can a son write an objective biography of his father, particularly when the father was one of the great leaders of the Confederate Army? Colonel William Preston Johnston certainly tries to do this in his massive work, first published in 1879. He does an admirable job of balancing pro and con through the last two-thirds of the volume, the years dealing with the Civil War.

General Johnston had his detractors and their comments are well represented. His son goes to great pains to point out, on his father's behalf, that the general had great difficulties getting what could be considered even the minimum number of men and muskets to fight the war

in the West. But then, when was there ever a military leader who felt he was truly well equipped?

William Johnston devotes much of his writing to the battle at Shiloh, but certainly not too much considering that struggle was pivotal to the entire war. He makes the case that had not Johnston died in the middle of the first afternoon at Shiloh, the Confederates would have won the battle, General Ulysses S. Grant probably would not have been heard from again, and the Confederacy could easily have won the war. Orders of battle, statistics and a few drawings help fill out the questions of who was where when.

This book is more than a Civil War chronicle. Johnston took part in the Black Hawk War, the Mexican-American War and served as both a military leader and as secretary of war with the Republic of Texas. All aspects of his life are well represented.

The general's most interesting experience may have been as the leader of the expedition to settle the Mormon "problem." Here William Johnston's work becomes controversial. His denunciation of the Mormons is truly bitter. Anti-Mormon sentiment may have been popular in the 1870s, when this work was first published, but today such writing, particularly when it adds little to the story, is anything but politically correct.

William Johnston ends with tributes to his father's memory—a nice final touch. This book is well worth reading, but the contemporary reader should be prepared for a writing style much different from that used today.

Jack Muhlenbeck, Public Affairs
Office, US Army Cadet Command,
Fort Monroe, Virginia

STRIKE SWIFTLY! THE 70TH TANK BATTALION: From North Africa to Normandy to Germany by Marvin Jensen. 350 pages. Presidio Press, Novato, CA. 1997. \$24.95.

In *Strike Swiftly!* Marvin Jensen expertly interweaves tales of bravery by members of the 70th Tank Battalion during World War II. The 70th Tank Battalion was at the cen-

ter of every major event in the European Theater. "It was there when the first shots were fired in French Morocco on 8 November 1942 and when the last shots were fired on 7 May 1945.

Recognized as the most decorated tank battalion in the US military, the 70th fought from Tunis, North Africa, during Operation *Torch*, to Sicily during the Italian Campaign, then in Germany's heartland after having landed on the beaches of Normandy on that fateful day in June 1944.

Using the theme of comradeship and courage, Jensen lets the men involved tell their stories in first-person accounts from 70th Tank Battalion veterans. What makes his method of presentation unique is that he smartly compartmentalizes the personal tales of bravery into a chronology of each battle. Consolidated books of interviews and sidebar tales are often disjointed and lack transition, but Jensen's book is sewn together so well one quickly forgets it is a compilation of personal recollections.

Reading and comparing this book with Stephen E. Ambrose's *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (G.K. Hall and Company, New York, 762 pages (large print), 1998, \$28.95) gives the reader a better understanding of how those courageous warriors, who were minimally trained, rose to the occasion in some of the war's harshest conditions.

With this book, Jensen details the finest attributes a soldier of any era could portray. *Strike Swiftly!* is a living tribute to the brave tankers who were pioneers in their branch of service.

MAJ Dominic J. Caracillo,
USA, 75th Ranger Regiment,
Fort Benning, Georgia

THE HISTORY OF THE U.S. ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS by Richard V.N. Ginn. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1997. \$45.00.

After the Crimean War, British nurse Florence Nightingale argued

for a hospital organization that would free the surgeon from administrative and non-patient care duties. A support staff, she wrote, would provide the required expertise to maintain the daily operations of the hospital. Over time, the US Army Medical Service Corps (MSC) was developed to fill that need. And, as the Army Medical Department has grown, so has MSC. With administrative, operational and scientific officers, MSC provides all the support needed to maintain a robust Army Medical Department.

This book describes the fits, starts, setbacks and accomplishments of MSC's development. The story is told through chronological vignettes that outline MSC's growth. The series tells the story of dedicated support to casualties on the battlefield, patients in the hospital and scientific

pursuits in the field and laboratory. An underlying theme is the development of opportunities for MSC and members of its various career fields, all of which are mentioned.

Ginn illustrates the origin and growth of all MSC specialties, from the first medical logisticians in 1862 to the 26 distinct fields that exist today. Along the way, he follows the various paths that the specialties went through—military necessity, political expediency or professional expansion. In doing so, he clearly explains the true meaning of “medical service.”

Medical service is not about being subservient to, or beneath, physicians, it is about being equal members on the healthcare team. MSC tasks have evolved into a threefold mission: to deploy a healthy force, to deploy a ready medical force and

to manage the health care of all beneficiaries.

In a work this encompassing, continuity of details for a single specialty can be lost. Fortunately, this is not the case here. The book has a smooth story line and a usable index. The reader can easily track the development of a specific specialty or the corps as a whole.

It was Nightingale's opinion that the head of a hospital should be chosen for his “capacity of administration” not solely for his possession of a medical degree. In the summer of 1999, for the first time, three MSC colonels were chosen for just such roles, taking command of garrison hospitals. The history of the Medical Service Corps continues to evolve.

LTC David Rubenstein, USA,
AMEDD, Martinez, Georgia

